



# Local music collecting in Canadian cultural heritage institutions: a summary of recent research

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# Outline

- Introduction to Sounds of Home
- Summary: a survey of local music in Canadian libraries
- Research in progress: local music in Canadian cultural heritage organizations
- Next steps

# Sounds of Home: Exploring Local Music Collections and Collecting in Canada

- Explores the connection between **music** and **place** through experiences of local music collection managers in Canadian heritage organizations



Georgia Straight, BEV DAVIES

# Research objectives

- Identify locations of local music collections and their characteristics
- Document local music collection management practices and identify areas where practices may be improved
- Better understand the experiences and perceptions of those collecting local music



# Why study local music collections and collecting?

- Growing professional and research interest
- Underrepresented in scholarly literature
- Connected to local histories, community diversity, and broader artistic and social developments

# Areas of research

## Music Scenes

- Popular music studies approach
- considers local music as documentary evidence of broader cultural formations

## Special Collections

- library and information/archival sciences
- speaks to the value of collecting and documenting rare or unique artifacts

“Local scene is focused in social activity that takes place in a delimited space and over a specific span of time in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans realize their common musical taste, collectively distinguishing themselves from others by using music and cultural signs ...”

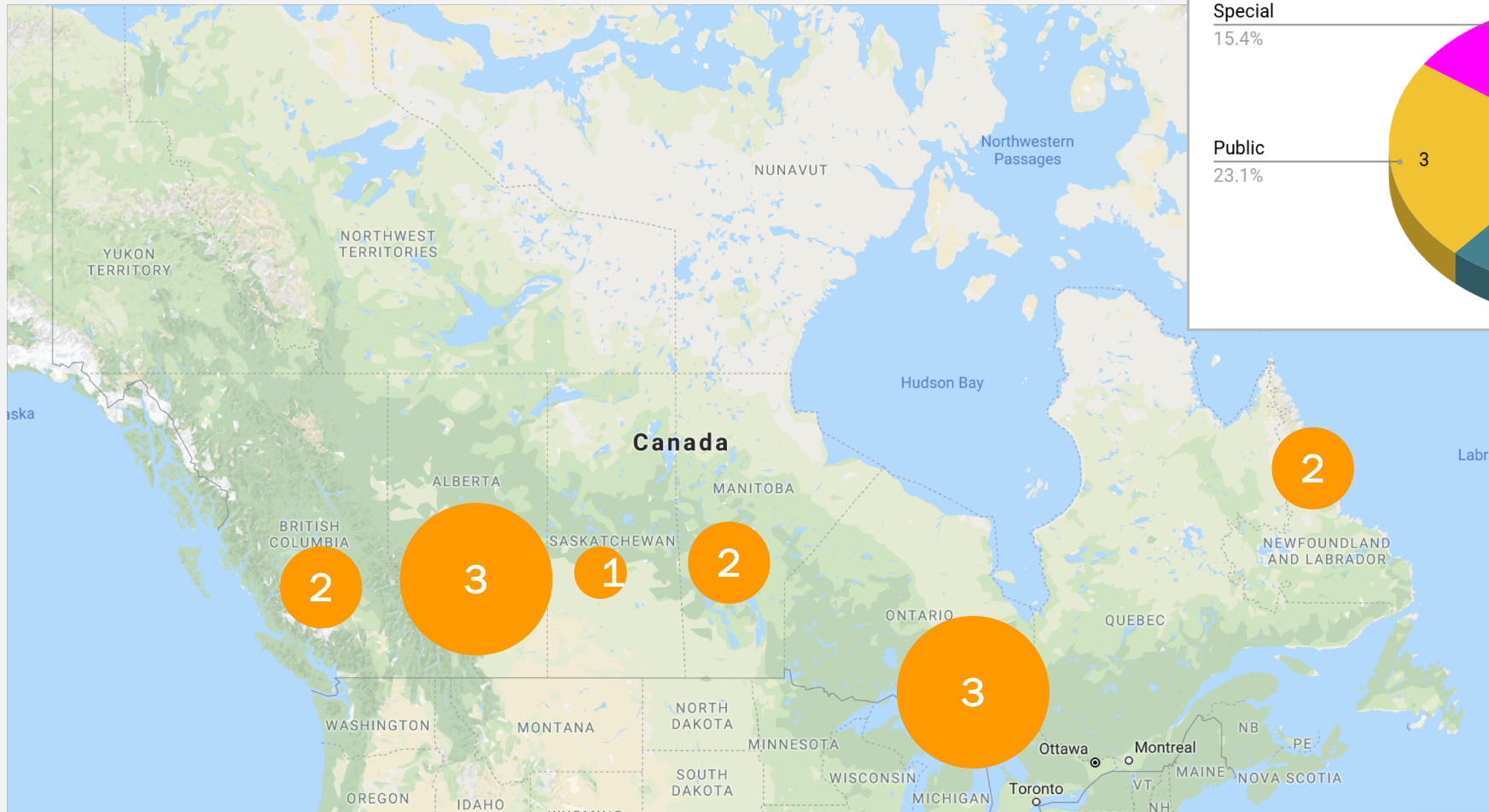
<http://subcultureslist.com/scene/>

# Phase one: Survey of local music collections in Canadian libraries

- Method: exploratory survey research
- Survey distributed via email for a 3 week period in May 2018
- Participants from Canadian libraries
- 20 questions (18 closed/4 open ended)



# Library location and library types

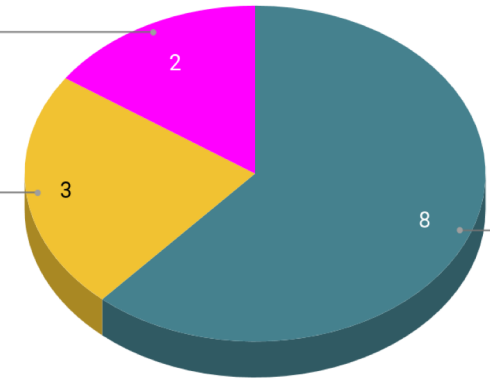


Library type

Special  
15.4%

Public  
23.1%

Academic  
61.5%

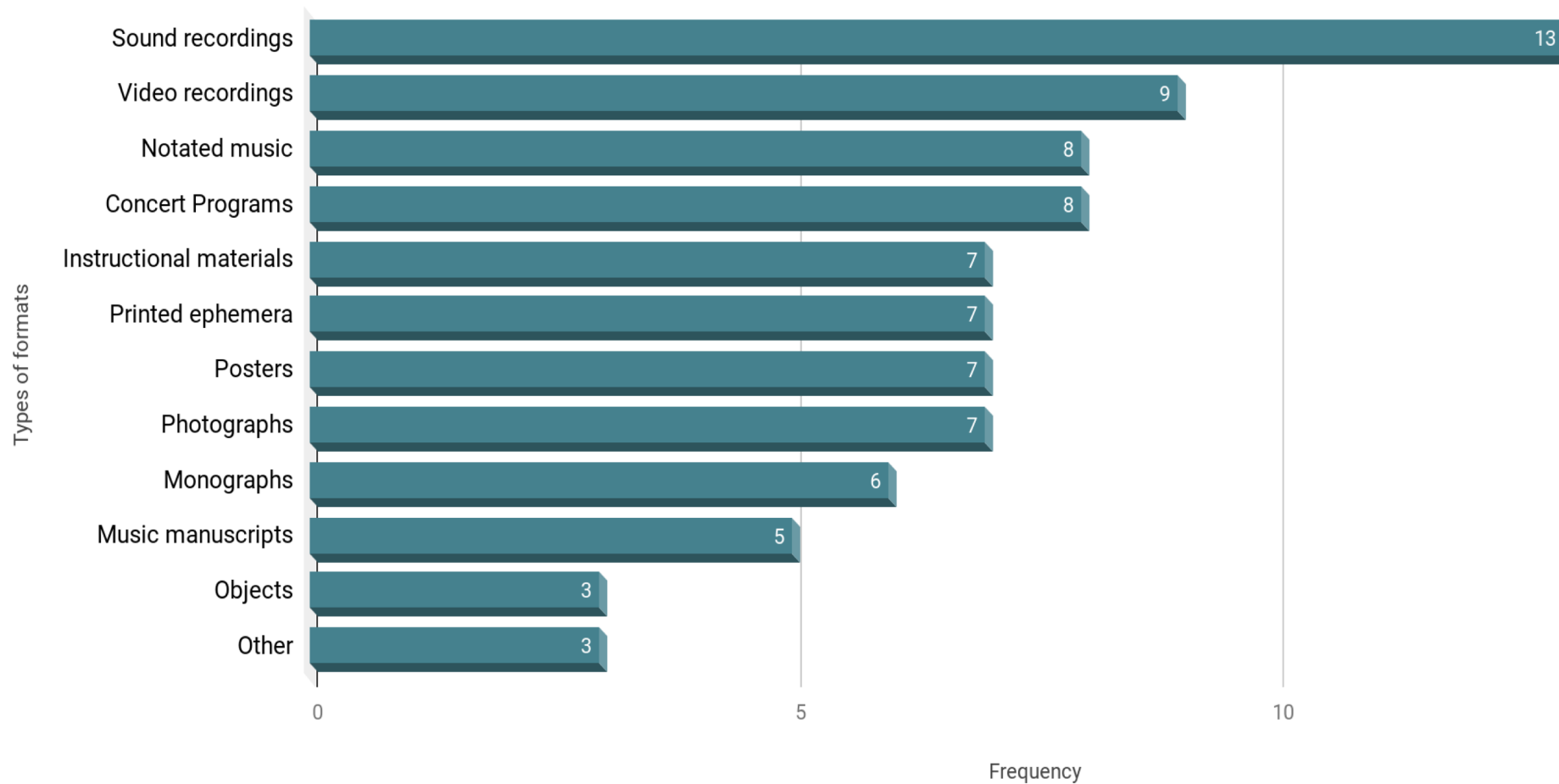


# Local music collections descriptions

- Definition of local is varied (provincial, institutional, city, etc.)
- Collections contain many formats, including archival materials
- A/V materials (particularly sound recordings) are most often included
- Majority (12/13) of collections are growing

# Formats

What formats are included in your local music collection(s)?



# Local music collection users

- Community members are the primary users of local music collections, followed by researchers as secondary users
- Primary collection use is research based (scholarly, historical, community, family)



# Access and preservation

- All collections receive cataloguing (of some kind)
- 76.9% of collections use metadata to distinguish the local music materials
- Primarily located in an archive or special collection within the library
- All collections are accessible in person and more than half (61.53%) are also available online.
- 61.5% of respondents are employing some kind of preservation method (physical, digital or both)

*“Working with the musical community is key to the development of a robust collection. That can be a challenge when the region is so vast, geographically. Hence, digital access is an important aspect of fostering relationships with individuals and communities that are situated great distances from the institution.”*

Survey participant

# Acquisitions

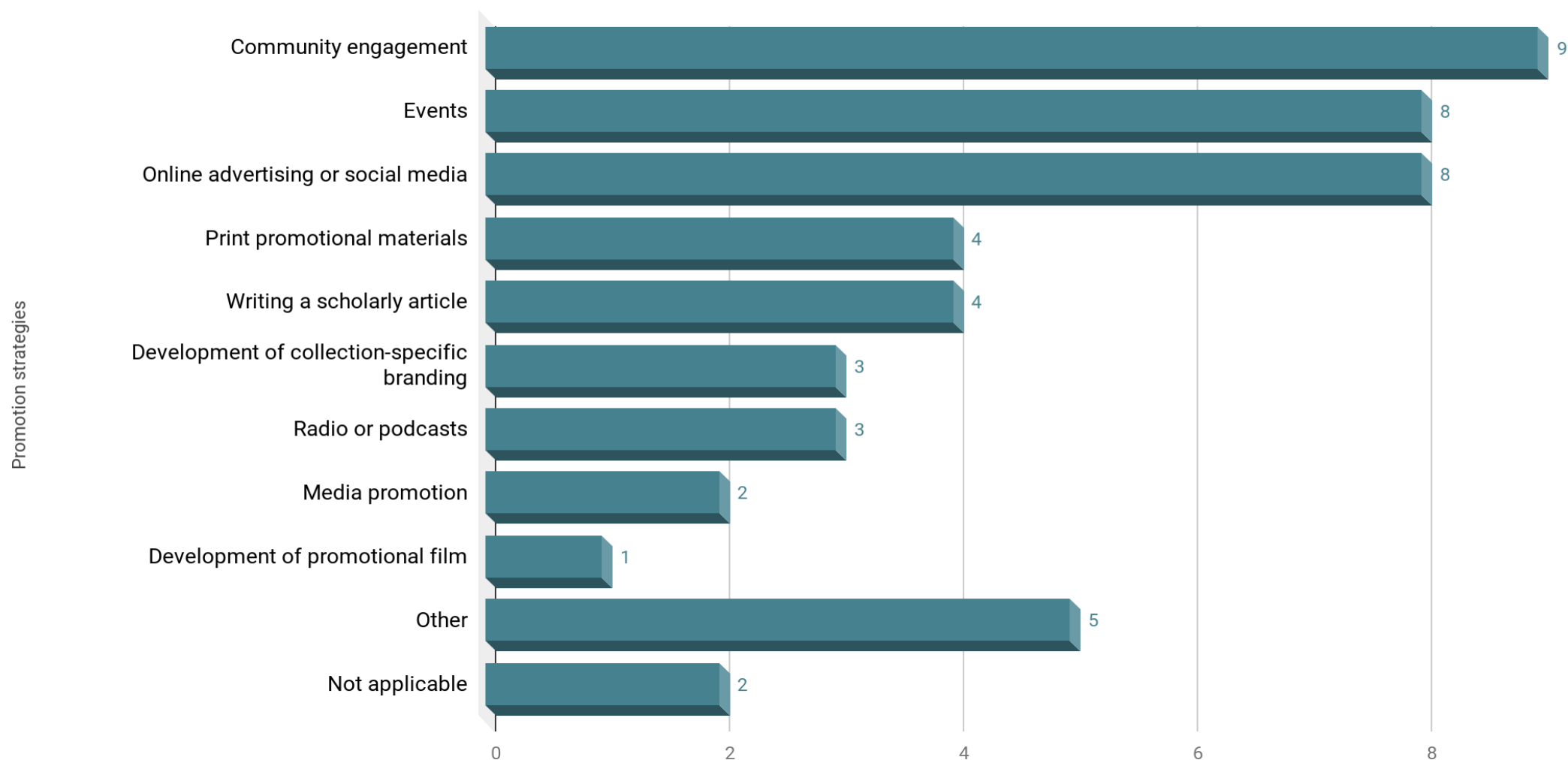
- Popular strategies for identifying and selecting local music include: conducting research, community engagement, collection development policies, and building community partnerships
- Popular acquisition methods include: working with music stores/vendors, donations, or working with individual artists

# Promotion, outreach, and fund acquisition

- Most popular promotion activities are: community engagement activities, hosting events, and using online advertising or social media
- Funding is secured from a variety of sources within and beyond the institution



## Q10 How are the local music collection(s) promoted?



# Survey results: discussion

- Scope statements vary considerably with regard to definitions of “local,” format types, and type of connection to community
- Community & relationship building is key to successful collection building and long term growth
- Management of local music collections requires diverse and specialized skills

# Phase two: Data collection in cultural heritage institutions

- Purpose: To better understand the **values**, **lived experiences**, and **perceptions** of local music collection managers in Canadian cultural heritage organizations
- Gather diverse perspectives on local music collecting, collections, and impact for communities
- Identify locations and descriptions of local music collections in Canada

# Method: qualitative research interviews & site visits

- The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects
- Semi-structured interview guide approach
- The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 2015)
- Photo documentation and site visits



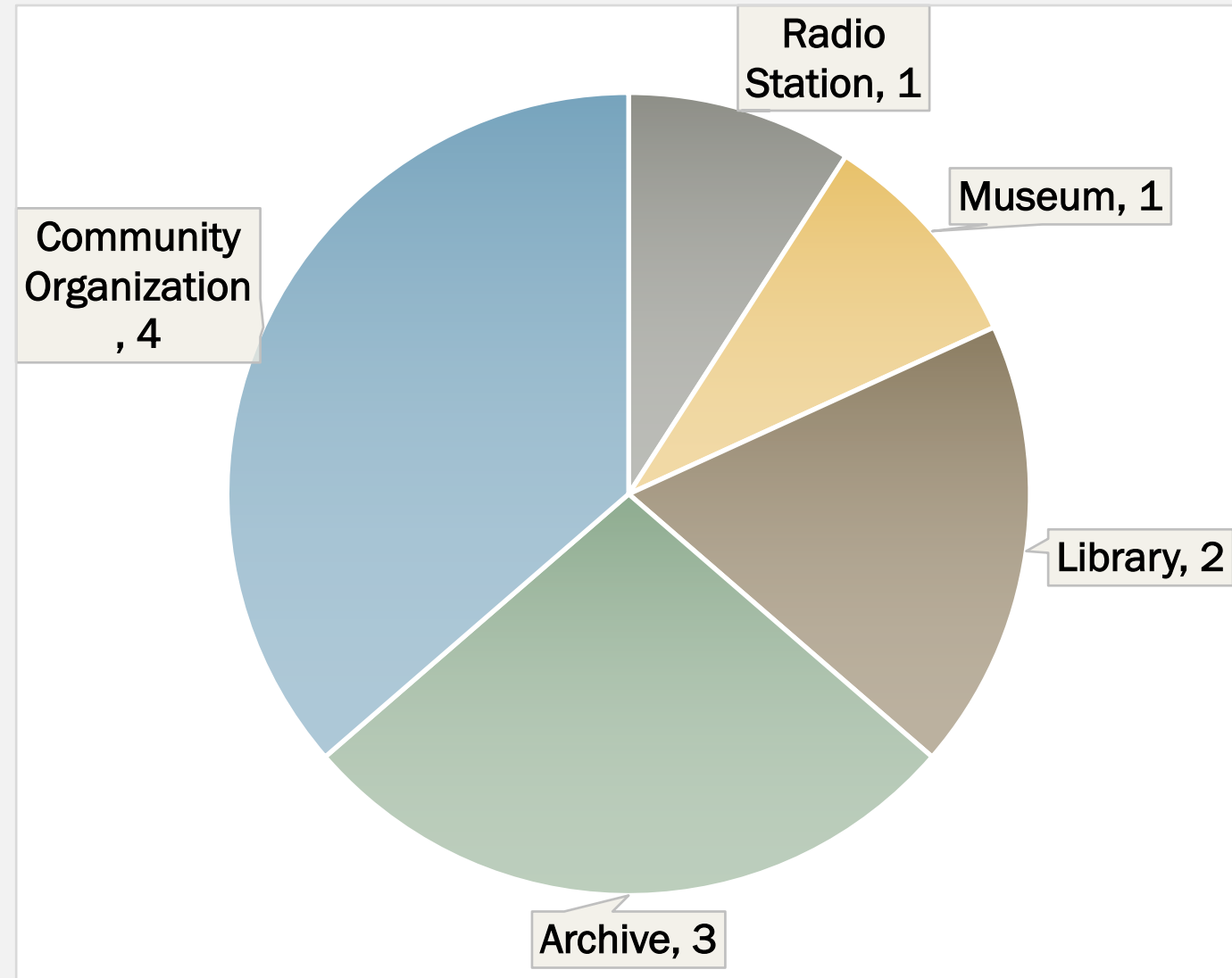


# Interview guide

- Collection(s) background and description
- Participant background
- The value and significance of local music collecting/collections
- Local music collecting and the community
  - Contributors
  - Users
- Challenges

# Participants

- Canadian cultural heritage organizations
- Collection or project managers working with local music



# Initial findings ...

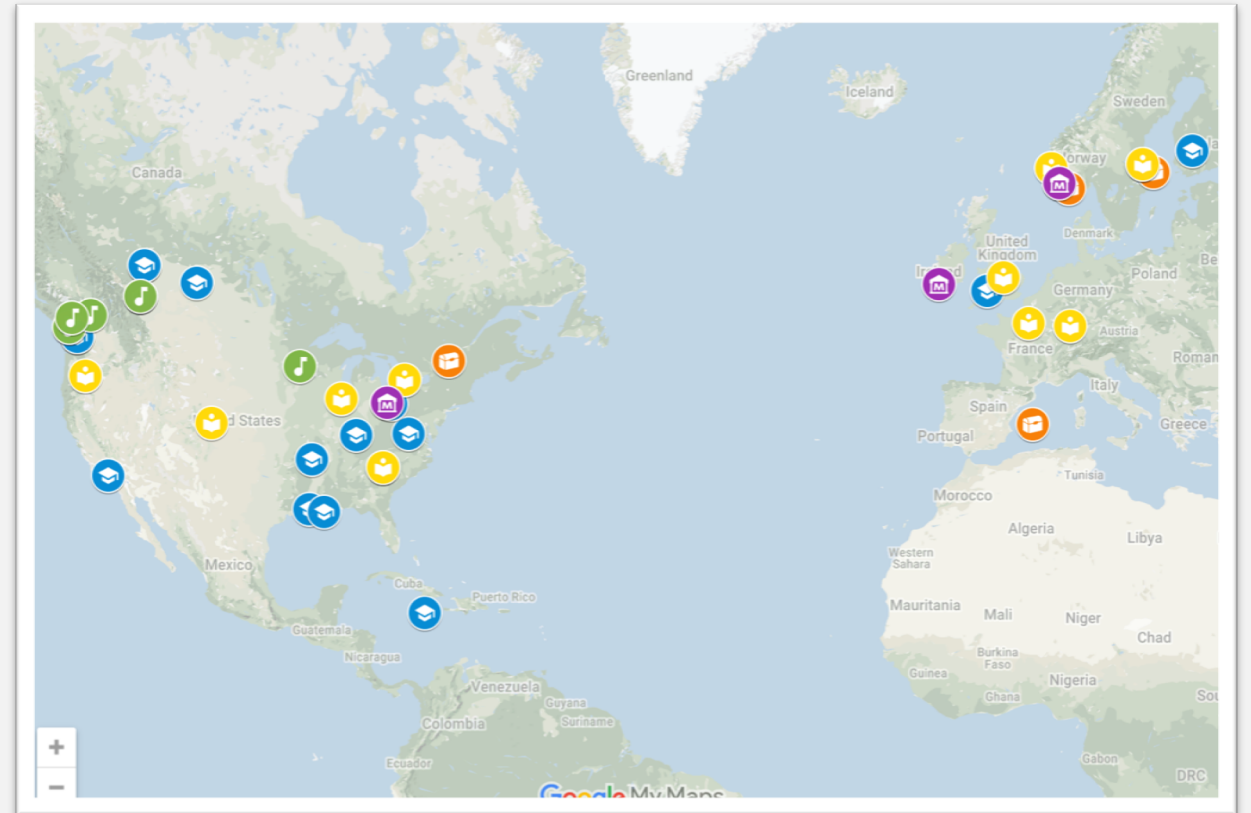
- Local music is collected in a wide variety of cultural heritage organizations and is often considered rare, or on the verge of being lost.
- collectors often consider local music to be underrepresented in academic conversations, but a significant part of colloquial community history
- collections are not format specific
- collection managers are often working closely with or as a part of the local community
- challenges include: funding, infrastructure, time, interest

# What does this mean for music libraries?

- Reach out to community in all aspects of local music collecting work
- Opportunities for collaboration with other cultural heritage institutions

# Next steps

- Ongoing interviews in central and eastern Canada
- Data analysis
- Upcoming publications & presentations (Fontes; MLA2019)
- Visualizing local music collecting and collections



# Questions?

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